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HARINI AMARASURIYA SWORN IN AS SRI LANKA'S NEW PRIME MINISTER

The 54-year-old sociology lecturer was sworn in by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who appointed his cabinet of four, including himself

DISSANAYAKE KEEPS KEY FINANCE PORTFOLIO

Amarasuriya, who was first elected to parliament four years ago, is known for her activism on gender equality and minority rights issues. She is the third female PM in the country's history and has been assigned the portfolios of education, labour, health, industries, investment, science & technology, and justice. Dissanayake has kept the key finance portfolio to himself | **P14**

PARLIAMENT DISSOLVED, ELECTION ON NOV 14

- Vijitha Herath and Laxman Nipunarachchi will also serve as caretaker ministers. Later, Dissanayake signed a gazette notification ordering dissolution of parliament and holding snap polls on November 14
- Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund said it is ready to discuss its ongoing bailout programme with the Dissanayake-led government

$2.9 billion

IMF'S BAILOUT PACKAGE FOR SRI LANKA, OF WHICH $770 MILLION HAS BEEN RELEASED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

HC GREEN FLAGS GUV'S APPROVAL FOR PROBE AGAINST CM SIDDU

Why rule bent in allotting MUDA sites to Siddu's wife needs probe: HC

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

IN a major setback to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday upheld the approval given by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against him in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case.

The court upheld the governor's approval under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act on August 16 to investigate the allegations against Siddaramaiah. Justice M Nagaprasanna pronounced the verdict, dismissing the petition filed by the CM against the Governor's approval in connection with the sites allotted to his wife Parvathy BM by MUDA, citing lack of merit. The case pertains to allotment of 14 sites worth Rs 56 crore to the chief minister's wife in the upscale Vijayanagar 3rd Stage in Mysuru for the land relinquished at Kesare village, which was outside Mysuru city limits.

The court specially noted that Siddaramaiah's son, MLA Dr S Yathindra, had participated in a meeting where a resolution was passed in 2020 to allot 14 sites to his mother on compensatory basis; but the resolution was withdrawn citing its illegality. And yet the 14 sites had remained with her. "What happens to the 14 sites which were granted to CM's wife on the basis of illegal resolution is a matter of investigation to unearth how and why the rule was bent in favour of CM's wife. If this does not require investigation, the court fails to understand what other case can merit investigation, as the beneficiary is the wife of the CM and the benefit is by leaps and bounds, a windfall," the court said.

The High Court said the facts narrated in the complaints before the governor seeking an approval for a probe into the case "undoubtedly require investigation against him (Siddaramaiah)".

The court said Siddaramaiah was "behind the smoke screen" for every benefit that has flown to his wife in terms of the sites allotted to her.

CONTINUED ON P4

CM Siddaramaiah addresses the media after the Karnataka High Court's verdict, as DCM DK Shivakumar looks on, in Bengaluru on Tuesday | VINOD KUMAR T

Not committed any mistake, won't quit: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AFTER the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday rejected Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's plea challenging Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's sanction to prosecute him in the MUDA case, the CM asserted that he will not resign from his post as he has not done anything wrong.

After the HC's verdict, Siddaramaiah along with DCM DK Shivakumar, his cabinet colleagues, including Law Minister HK Patil, Energy Minister KJ George, Social Welfare Minister HC Mahadevappa, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa and Agriculture Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy, held a high-voltage press conference at his official residence Krishna.

Siddaramaiah said he has not yet thoroughly read the HC's order, but will take the next course of legal action, including moving the Supreme Court, after discussing it with legal experts, his cabinet colleagues at the meeting on Thursday and the party high command. P4

RESIGN ON MORAL GROUNDS, BJP TELLS SIDDARAMAIAH

BJP on Tuesday demanded the immediate resignation of CM Siddaramaiah after the Karnataka High Court dismissed his petition challenging Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's approval for an investigation against him in the MUDA site allotment case. State BJP president BY Vijayendra said the High Court verdict was a victory for the party's fight. **P4**

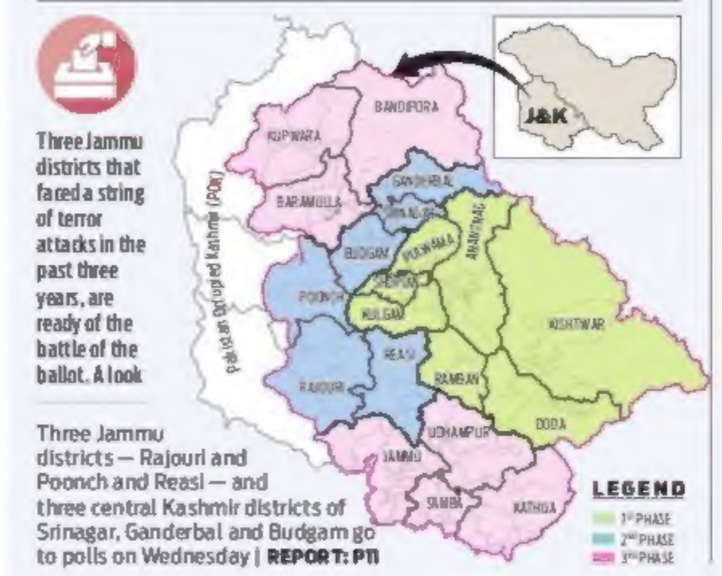
SIDDU'S PARTY COLLEAGUES BACK HIM TO THE HILT

Undeterred over the Karnataka High Court dismissing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's petition, the state Congress backed him to the hilt to continue as the CM. Informed sources within the party, however, have no clue as to whether the Congress high command will back Siddaramaiah if an FIR is registered against him as part of the probe. **P4**

THE EXODUS BEGINS

Residents in panic flee with their belongings in Beirut on Tuesday amid intense Israeli airstrikes across Lebanon | AP | **P14**

J&K PHASE II POLLS TODAY



Three Jammu districts that faced a string of terror attacks in the past three years, are ready of the battle of the ballot. A look

Three Jammu districts — Rajouri and Poonch and Reasi — and three central Kashmir districts of Srinagar, Ganderbal and Budgam go to polls on Wednesday | **REPORT: PTI**

26 SEATS

to witness polls, 15 in Kashmir region and 11 in Jammu region

25.78 lakh Voters eligible to cast their ballot; **13,12,730** of them male and **12,65,316** female

239 Candidates in the fray

3,502 Total polling stations

31 Polling stations on the border

MAIN CONTESTANTS

Omar Abdullah (National Conference vice president), **Tariq Hamid Karra** (J&K Congress chief), **Ravindra Raina** (J&K BJP president), **Altaf Bukhar** (Apni Party president)

Law panel's report on 'one poll' yet to be made public

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE government is yet to make public the 22nd Law Commission's report on 'One Nation, One Election', which was submitted to the Union law ministry in March this year.

According to law ministry sources, the 22nd Law Commission of India headed by Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi submitted the final report on simultaneous elections before he demitted office in March. Justice Awasthi quit the panel after he was appointed as a judicial member of anti-corruption body Lokpal.

It assumes significance as the Union Cabinet recently approved the 'One Nation, One Election' proposal of a high-level committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind. Though the Law Commission began its work in November 2022 — much earlier than the Kovind panel — its final report has not yet been published or made available in public domain. It was in September last year that the government set up the Kovind committee.

According to sources, the law panel recommended synchronising the terms of state assemblies in "two phases" in the next five years so that the first simultaneous elections could be held in May-June 2029. The report suggested that in the two election cycles, the tenure of some of the states may have to be extended while some may have to be curtailed through Constitutional amendments.

It also suggested adding a chapter to the Constitution on 'one poll', with "power of non-extant" to override other provisions in the Constitution dealing with terms of assemblies.

Modi meets Zelenskyy in New York, offers India's support for peace bid

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

BEFORE wrapping up his three-day visit to the US, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a bilateral meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the third such meeting between the two leaders in about three months.

The meeting, held on the sidelines of the UN's Summit of the Future, was requested by the Ukrainian side. Foreign secretary Vikram Misri said the back-to-back interaction between the two leaders shows India's commitment to finding a way forward and contributing in any way possible to a resolution of the conflict.

In the meeting, Modi conveyed India's readiness to provide all support to facilitate a lasting and peaceful resolution of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The PM also reiterated India's

Narendra Modi

Volodymyr Zelenskyy

"clear, consistent and constructive approach in favour of a peaceful resolution of the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue as well as engagement between all stakeholders".

Recalling his recent trip to Kyiv, Modi said: "We are committed to implementing the outcomes of my visit to Ukraine to strengthen bilateral relations. Reiterated India's support for early resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and restoration of peace and stability."

Modi had travelled to Kyiv in August to meet the Ukrainian leader, just weeks after he met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. In June, Modi had held a bilateral meeting with Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Italy.

Zelenskyy thanked Modi for the peace efforts. "We are actively developing our relations and working together to strengthen cooperation across various fields. The main focus of our conversation was on enhancing our interaction on international platforms, particularly at the UN and G20, as well as implementing the Peace Formula and preparing for the second Peace Summit. We had a substantive discussion on the available opportunities," he wrote on X.

Misri said the two leaders agreed to be in touch through visits and at other levels.

(With inputs from agencies)

Waqf Board starts survey, says 90k acres encroached

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

AT a time when the Central government is trying to bring in reforms to the Waqf Bill, and a parliamentary committee is examining the amendments, the Karnataka State Board of Auqaf has started the exercise of surveying its properties and gazetting them.

As per data from the Board, it has 1,07,651 acres of land under its possession, of which 90,000 acres are under litigation in various courts.

K Anwar Basha, chairman, Karnataka State Board of Auqaf, told The New Indian Express: "At present, the Board has 1,07,651 acres of land under its possession. But the custodians of these properties are the 40,840 institutions that are using them. The land belongs to them."

Earlier, the Board had over 1.10 lakh acres of land, but due to various land reforms, including the Inams Abolition Act, Land Reforms Act and others, many acres were lost. "People had started donating lands to the Waqf Board from as early as 1828. The Board also lost over 75,000 acres to the government for various projects, like creation of the Almatti dam and others. We have been given due compensation. Now we are asking for compensation or land in lieu of the 90,000 acres under litigation," said another Board member, not wanting to be named. The lands which have been handed over have been utilised for setting up dargahs, mosques, graveyards and other such facilities. CONTINUED ON P7

EXPRESS READ

NIA chargesheets two for radicalising youth

Bengaluru: The NIA on Tuesday filed a chargesheet against two men, who are already accused in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case, for radicalising youth and terror funding. The duo is Abdul Matheen Ahmed Taaha alias Taha and Mussavir Hussain Shazib alias Shazib | **P5**

Justice Narendar G for U'khand CJ: Collegium

New Delhi: The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Tuesday recommended the appointment of Andhra Pradesh High Court judge Narendar G as the Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court. Incumbent Justice Ritu Bahri will retire on Oct 10

PREVENTING MISUSE

Stop sharing live stream videos of courts, says HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court restrained YouTube, Facebook, Twitter Communication India and a few other digital media platforms from sharing the live stream of court proceedings with immediate effect. The digital media platforms are Kahale News, Fans Troll, Pratidhvani, Avaniyana and Ravindra Joshi Creations.

The court also directed all of them to delete all the live stream videos uploaded on their respective platforms with immediate effect which are posted in violation of Rule 10 of the Karnataka Rules on Live Streaming and Recording of Court Proceedings, 2021.

Justice Hemant Chandangoudar passed the interim order on Tuesday on a petition filed by the Advocates' Association of Bengaluru. The court issued notices to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the state government, the Registrar General of the High Court and the DG&IGP.

The court issued emergent notices to digital media houses. The petition stated that a new trend of misusing live streamed court proceedings has become rampant for commercial and entertainment purposes. This is not only misleading the public as small snippets of court proceedings would give partial information. With this, the public forms a wrong opinion about the judiciary.

Viewers make contemptuous comments against judges and also post remarks degrading advocates, it added.

Those videos are falsely projected by miscreants for personal and political gain, it said, adding that the act of a few video makers is not only tarnishing the reputation of the advocates but also hampering the trust and faith reposed by the public on the judiciary, it said.

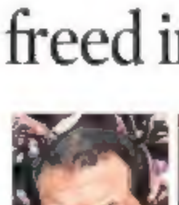
Actor-MLA Mukesh held, freed in rape case; Siddique on the run

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

KERALA police on Tuesday swung into action on complaints against film personalities in the wake of revelations in the Hema Committee report as it arrested actor and CPI(M) MLA M Mukesh in a rape case and issued a lookout notice against another actor, Siddique, after the Kerala High Court denied the latter anticipatory bail in a similar case.

However, actor-politician Mukesh was released shortly after his arrest was recorded by the Special Investigation Team as he had obtained anticipatory bail from the Ernakulam district court on September 5. He was questioned for about three hours in connection with a complaint filed by an actress, who accused him of sexually assaulting her under the pretext of offering film roles and membership in the film artists' association AMMA in 2016. Mukesh was grilled by a team led by AIG G Poonkuzhali in Kochi. He was also subjected to a potency test.

Meanwhile, actor Siddique is absconding and is reportedly set to move the Supreme Court



M Mukesh

Siddique

to evade arrest. He is accused of raping an actress in 2016.

The SIT searched his residence in Kochi and other places, including hotels. His mobile phones were found switched off. "We have begun monitoring domestic terminals at the Kochi Airport. As per our information, his mobile tower location was found near the airport premises," said a source close to the SIT.

Earlier in the day, while dismissing Siddique's anticipatory bail petition, Justice C S Dias of the Kerala High Court observed that overall scrutiny of the facts, and the nature, gravity, and seriousness of the accusations show prima facie his involvement in the crime. Hence, the petitioner's custodial interrogation is inevitable for properly investigating the crime, especially since his defence is a total denial of the incident, and his potency test is to be done, the judge said.

Dismissing the petitioner's contention that the complaint lacks credibility as the survivor had earlier made allegations against 14 men, the court observed that the submission is "unwarranted and reflects an uncharitable view of the survivor's circumstances".

The court noted: "The attempt to blame a woman for speaking out may be a strategy to silence her, which is hostile to the supremacy of the law."